1: Cunningham G-3 (1846-47) 1854 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

X.—GOVERNMENT.

I.—NATURE OF GOVERNMENT.—VARIOUS OFFICERS.

THE government of Ladák was formerly a mild despotism under a ruler who bore the title of Gyalpo.* The conduct of affairs was generally intrusted to the prime minister, or *Kahlon;* and the king was well satisfied both with his minister and with his subjects, if the former gave him sufficient means† for the enjoyment of his royal pleasure, and if the latter never disturbed his quiet ease with their complaints. The king literally did nothing, except when roused to exertion by some unusual occurrence. His subjects could behold his royal presence only by the presentation of an offering in money, according to their circumstances. But this was a costly pleasure; and the mental abstraction of the Buddhist prince was rarely disturbed by the curiosity, or loyal zeal, of his people. Occasionally an ambitious prince would arise, who (like Singhé Namgyal) retained the whole power in his own hands.

[642] 643 645 175 643 175

* The ruler was usually called *rGyal-po*, or the emperor; and the queen was called *rGyal-mo*, or the empress. In writing more formality was used, and the ruler was either entitled *rGyal-po-chen-po*, "the great emperor," or he was designated by his own name *Singgé-rNam-rGyal*, "King Singge."

† The prime minister was always the Gyalpo's treasurer, or keeper of the privy purse.

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XII.—HISTORY.

I.—UNDER NATIVE RULERS.

175 642 "The earlier history of Ladák is that of Tibet in general, as it originally formed one of the provinces of that kingdom, governed as to temporal matters by an independent prince, and in spiritual affairs by the Guru Lama, or chief pontiff of Lhása." Such was Moorcroft's opinion;* and such also is that of the present inhabitants: and there can be no reasonable doubt that such was the usual position of Ladák, although its political dependence was more nominal than real. Under vigorous rulers, such as Palgyi-Gon in the tenth century, and Singgé Namgyal in the seventeenth century, its entire independence was asserted and upheld. But the original dependence at some distant period is, I think, clearly proved by the acknowledged descent of the Ladáki princes from Khri-Tsaupo, the first recorded king of Great Tibet.

175 779 The earliest historical notice of Ladák is that of the Chinese pilgrim *Fa-Hian*, in A.D. 400.† At that time

* Travels, I. p. 336.

† *Fo-kwe-ki.* French translation by Remusat, &c., p. 26. *Fo-kwe-ki.* English translation by J. W. Laidlay, p. 27, note 1. This translation is enriched by many valuable notes, both geographical and religious. It should be in the possession of every one who takes any interest in the ancient history of India.

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776 792 In Ladák there are only four resident skooSHoks, who preside over the monasteries at Speetuk, Tiksay, Phiáng and Reyzong, respectively. There is also a skooSHok belonging to Heymis the largest and richest of all the monasteries of Ladák, but, for some unexplained reason, some 3 or 4 births back, the skooSHok took birth at Lhása, and refused to come to Ladák, and since then, rebirths of this Heymis avatár have always taken place at Lhása.

The present incarnation must now be about 20 years of age. I am told that as he is a Lhása man, he does not care to come to Ladák, but that if ordered by the Kashmir Durbar to come, he would obey. [643] The truth of the matter is probably that he, having been brought up at the holy city of Lhása, where the Buddhist priesthood reigns supreme, does not care to come to Ladák where the Dogras are masters and Lámás occupy a very subordinate position. The information which I have been able to gather as to the rules under which a spirit, for the first time, becomes an incarnation, is not very clear, but, apparently, when any great Láma or other very holy and virtuous man dies, his spirit, instead of being reborn in the ordinary way, may take rebirth in the form of a "sprulskoo" or incarnation--after this, provided the "sprulskoo" leads a virtuous life in this world, it is optional with him to attain nirvana at once, or should he so desire, his spirit, after his death, is repeatedly reborn as a "sprulskoo." If on the other hand an incarnation leads a wicked life in this world, his punishment is, that his spirit, instead of being reborn as an incarnation, will take any ordinary rebirth.

An account of the different kinds of form in which a spirit may be re-embodied, will be found under the heading "Rebirth."

775 792 787 As regards the rebirth of the spirit of an incarnation, or sprulskoo the procedure is simple enough. Either the incarnation, before death, tells his disciples the circumstances under which, and the place in which, his spirit will be re-born, or should he die, without having given any such indication, his followers, the moment he dies, go and consult learned Lámás, who advise where the spirit will be reborn. The disciples then, in accordance with the instructions given, proceed to the spot indicated, and ascertain if any woman has conceived, or given birth to a child which may be the re-embodiment of the late skooSHok's spirit. If such is the case, they note the fact and go away for the time, but if it is not so, then they conclude that a mistake has been made, and they refer to the Lámas for fresh instructions and so

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735 by. It was only the occasional stranger who offered him any pos-
792 sible opportunity to make a cash profit.

[642] The poverty and ignorance in which the lamas hold the people
578 of this region mean that the lamas are supreme in temporal as
522 well as in spiritual matters. There is no revolt, not even any apparent resentment. Yet people are people the world around; and the Ladakhis show their resentment in simple, innocuous ways. It is in the form of making fun of the lamas. And one of the most dramatic ways is in the singing of a famous Ladakhi folk song.

[291] The women of Gya sang it for me. A dozen or more stood in line, close together. They were dressed in their conventional long black wool dresses. Most of them had on the picturesque *perakh*,[1] and the large black wool earpieces that stood out like sails from their heads. Most of them wore sheepskins over their shoulders—the skin that serves as a ground covering at night, a protection against rain by day, and a shield for the carrying of loads on the back. They were giggling as they started to sing; and the giggles interfered with the song until at last they finally settled to a
578 serious rendition. The song is a take-off on a man accused of be-
522 ing a lama. The man's name is Tashiwangyal, and he is the singer.
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Don't think I have no father;[1]
My father's caste is bright like sandalwood.[2]
Don't think I have no mother;
I'm like the guitar made out of the reindeer skin.[3]
Don't think I have no tongue;
I'm like the cord made of the inner skin of the goat.[4]
Don't think I am a lama;
Thang Thang Gyalpo is my lama.[5]*

[1]A lama is supposed to renounce his father and mother.
[2]He is, in other words, spotless.
[3]He's made of proper stuff.
[4]This skin has a fine texture.
[5]He was a very superior man who built a lot of monasteries.
*See page 334.

 7 [Headdress of older women -- Analyst]

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rate pieces of paper, wrapped each one in a piece of dough, put the three in a wheel or drum, and whirled it. Out pops one; and the man whose name is in the capsule is the Dalai Lama. How they controlled the wheel so that the name of the candidate they preferred popped out is a mystery. But I learned from my early days with a carnival in this country that such mysteries are not profound. I am sure this one is not above the reach of the average pitch man.

The Chinese made the process easier to manipulate. In 1793 a golden urn was sent from China. The names of the boys who were likely candidates for the reincarnation were placed in the urn. Religious services were held, and then chopsticks were used to pick out one slip of paper. Manipulation within that scheme of things was a simple affair.

The Chinese have gone so far in their manipulation of the doctrine of reincarnation as to prohibit rebirth of a person deemed inimical to the welfare of the state. In 1882 Sing Chen helped a foreigner into Tibet and allowed him to visit Lhasa. The Chinese were displeased. They put Sing Chen to death and forbade him to reincarnate. Thus, long before the Communists came to control in China, the Chinese authorities used the doctrine of reincarnation to serve their ends and to perpetuate their authority.

The Chinese have used the Panchen Lama to further their cause of subjecting Tibet. The Panchen Lama is second to the Dalai Lama. But in some respects—too recondite for me to understand—the Panchen Lama is "holier" than the Dalai Lama. He is a political invention of the fifteenth century—not an invention of the Chinese but of the ecclesiastical authorities who, on the growth of the political power of northern Tibet, created the Panchen Lama as the symbol of the north. But the south won out and the Dalai Lama remained supreme. Yet the Panchen Lama became a divisive influence in Buddhist ecclesiastical affairs.

The Panchen Lama has a large area of his own in Tibet over which he has control. His district is Tsang Province, where he

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exercises almost complete jurisdiction both in ecclesiastical and in temporal affairs. This region is his fief, and he is the supreme overlord.

In recent years, the Chinese have capitalized on this strategic position of the Panchen Lama. The previous Panchen Lama in 1924 quarreled with the Dalai Lama and left Lhasa for China. He stayed there until his death in 1937. Then the Chinese, in control of the selection of his predecessor, chose the present Panchen Lama. Up to August 1951, this Panchen Lama had never left China, had never been in Lhasa. But he, the second-in-command, sat in China urging the Tibetans to make peace with Red China, pleading with them to submit to the "liberation" program which the Communists designed for Tibet.

The objective of the Chinese Communist government in the summer of 1951 was to get the Dalai Lama under its control. He had become alarmed at the threat of the Red Army to Tibet. So he fled Lhasa, going with his entourage to Yatung, a small monastic town near Mount Everest on the Tibetan-Indian border. I had letters to the Dalai Lama and had arranged to visit him there. But before I arrived, a train of events had changed the course of history and sent the Dalai Lama north, a virtual captive of Red China.

The family of the Dalai Lama and many influential people in the hierarchy pleaded with him not to return to Lhasa. They pointed out that if he did, he would be a ready victim of Communist intrigue. The Communists would work to liquidate the system of landlordism on which the monasteries depended. The Communists would appropriate the wealth of Tibet to their own ends, robbing the church. The Communists would undercut the authority of the Dalai Lama, making him a mere vassal. The Communists would make the monasteries dependent on them for financial support; and once the Communists got effective control, the Dalai Lama and all other lamas would be mere puppets of the Red regime. There were personal reasons as well on the side of leaving Tibet. The Dalai Lama's mother had left Tibet. The

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eventually led to the combination of both spiritual and temporal power in the Dalai Lama. The Yellow Hats met with reverses in Tibet. The Sakya, or Red Hats, were in favor with the King. The Yellow Sect was losing its political support. But in Mongolia the Yellow Sect was supreme. The fifth Dalai Lama conspired with Gusri, King of Mongolia, in the seventeenth century for Gusri to invade Tibet. Gusri conquered Tibet and made Tibet over to the fifth Dalai Lama (actually Talai Lama, meaning Great like Ocean). Since that time, the Dalai Lama has had both the spiritual and temporal power in Tibet—an autocratic power that probably no other nation in the modern world has known. Each succeeding Dalai Lama has been a Yellow Hat. And the theory evolved that Tsongkapa, founder of the Yellow Sect, was the reincarnation of the first national King of Tibet and that the latter was the reincarnation of Chenrezi, the Tibetan deity who is the Lord of Mercy. The temporal power of the Dalai Lama was thus traced back to temporal sources of power.

The Dalai Lama exercises his temporal power. Half of the regular civil service of Tibet are lamas, half laymen. The government posts are usually held by two or three men—a lama and a layman, two lamas and one layman, one lama and two laymen. There usually is no division of work; they are colleagues who act jointly; they are used as checks on each other.

That night at the Sankar Monastery we talked of these things. We talked of the great possibilities of Communist control of this highly centralized spiritual and temporal power. As we talked, we sat cross-legged on the floor in Bakula's room.

We had come to Sankar at night through rocky lanes that wound across vast barley fields. Lamas met us with torches at the high front steps of the monastery. They bowed low in greeting and then scampered ahead as they led the way through a labyrinth of dark hallways. We climbed rough, stone steps; we passed through stone corridors where the flares cast weird shadows; we stooped low to enter doorways; we passed through dark rooms,

the higher hill slopes up to 19,000 feet contain hares and marmots, and the beautiful snow leopard (Felis uncia) and the lynx (F. lynx). Knight, in Where Three Empires meet, remarks:--

'Not only man, but also all creatures under his domination --horses, sheep, goats, fowls--are diminutive here, whereas the wild animals on the high mountains are of gigantic size.'

Drew counted as many as 300 kiang in a day's march. In outward appearance the kiang is like a mule, brown in colour with white under the belly, a dark stripe down the back, but no cross on the shoulder. One kiang shot by Drew was 54 inches in height. The flesh is rather like beef. They are common on the Changchenmo, and are met with in many parts of Ladakh, where their curiosity often disconcerts sportsmen by alarming game worth shooting. A curious fact in the fauna of Ladakh is the absence of birds in the higher parts of the country. An occasional raven is the only bird to be seen.

Climate. The climate is very dry and healthy. Rainfall is extremely slight, but fine dry flaked snow is frequent, and sometimes the fall is heavy. There is a remarkable absence of thunder and lightning. The air is invigorating, and all travellers notice the extraordinary extremes of cold and heat. In Rupshu the thermometer falls as low as 9° in September. The minimum temperature of the month is 23.5°, and the mean temperature 43°. As Knight remarks:--

'So thin and devoid of moisture is the atmosphere that the variations of temperature are extreme, and rocks exposed to the sun's rays may be too hot to lay the hand upon, at the same time that it is freezing in the shade. To be suffering from heat on one side of one's body, while painfully cold on the other, is no uncommon sensation here.'

History. The history of Ladakh, until its conquest by Raja Gulab Singh in the first half of the nineteenth century, is intimately connected with Tibet, with which country it still holds commercial and religious relations. Stories are told of invasions in the seventeenth century by the neighbouring Baltis, sometimes successful, sometimes repulsed. About the end of the seventeenth century the Ladakhis called in the aid of the governor of Kashmir to repel the Sokpos, a Mughal tribe. Help was promptly given, and the Sokpos were driven out of Ladakh, after which it paid tribute to Kashmir. Prior to annexation by the Dogras, the government of the country was a mild form of monarchy. The ruler was called Gialpo or king, but the real power rested with the minister or Kahlon. The only

check on the latter was the widespread authority of the monasteries. The chief of these is Himis Gompa, on the left bank of the Indus, 18 miles above Leh. This monastery, which contains 400 to 800 monks and nuns, stands at the head of a wild glen and covers a considerable space of ground. An important festival, called the Himis Tsheshū, is held annually on the tenth day of the fifth month (about June 7), when the whole country-side flock to the monastery and witness the weird devil-dance of the Buddhist Lāmas. A constant spectator is the Gialpo of Ladākh. The monastery is believed to contain great wealth, and the treasure is kept under guard in order to prevent its being carried over the border to Lhāsa. The chief shrine is faced entirely with silver plate. Its treasure-house has small vases filled with pearls, turquoises, and rubies, said to be of value.

Leh (population, 2,079) is the only place of importance in Ladākh, and there are besides 463 villages. With the exception of one village of Shiah Musalmāns in Chhachkot, and of the Arguns or half-breeds, practically the whole population, excluding the town of Leh, is Buddhist. The people style themselves Bhots. According to the last Census, there are now 30,216 Buddhists living in Ladākh. They have the Mongolian cast of features, and are strong and well made, ugly, but cheerful and good-tempered. If they do quarrel over their barley beer (*chang*), no bad blood remains afterwards. They are very truthful and honest, and it is said that in court the accused or defendant will almost invariably admit his guilt or acknowledge the justice of the claim.

The people.

There are five main castes (*riks*): the Rgrial *riks*, or ryot caste; the Trangzey *riks*, or priestly caste; the Rjey *riks*, or high officials; the Hmang *riks*, or lower officials and agricultural classes; and the Tolbay *riks*, or artificers and musicians. This last caste, also known as Bem, is considered inferior.

The Ladākhis may be divided into the Champas or nomads, who follow pastoral pursuits on the upland valleys, too high for cultivation; and the Ladākhis proper, who have settled in the valley and the side valleys of the Indus, cultivating with great care every patch of cultivable ground. These two classes do not, as a rule, intermarry, and Champas rarely furnish recruits to the monasteries. The Ladākhis are mostly engaged in agriculture, and in spite of the smallness of their holdings they are fairly prosperous. Their great wants are fuel and timber. For fuel they use cow-dung and the bush known as *burtse*. Their only timber trees are the scattered and scanty willows and poplars which grow along the watercourses.